# Parents victoria (PV):

# Gifts Benefits and Hospitality

# Information for School communities

Teachers, Principals and members of School Councils sometimes receive offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality from suppliers and members of the school community. By declaring such offers, school staff support integrity, protect their reputation and build public confidence in schools.

**ONLINE REGISTRY SYSTEM**

From Tuesday 15 May 2018, the online Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Registry System replaces hard-copy declaration forms that schools previously used.

The system provides all schools and corporate with an equivalent, fast and simple process for declaring and managing gift, benefit and hospitality offers.

Access to a school’s declaration records is limited to that school, relevant delegates and the Registry System Administrator.

## Department policy

The Department’s Policy can be viewed at: [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/spag/governance/gifstbenefitshospitality.docx).

All Victorian Government school-based personnel, including School Council members and employees, must:

* not seek or solicit gifts, benefits and hospitality for themselves or others
* refuse offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality that may adversely affect their standing as a public official.

Offers that have a non-token value must be declared in the Registry System, whether accepted or declined, as follows:

* General gift, benefit or hospitality offers - valued at $50 and above
* Gifts of Appreciation - valued above $100, received by teachers from families and students who want to express their appreciation of the teacher’s contribution to the education of a student or students.

Whole of Government rules prohibit any public sector personnel, including all school-based staff, from accepting vouchers and cash cards, whether as general gifts or as Gifts of Appreciation.

## Support for new systems

The Department appreciates that teachers, families and the business community will require time to adjust to the declaration process and the rules around what gifts and hospitality can and cannot be accepted by school personnel.

Tailored guidance material has been developed for school staff, with input from Parents Victoria and other school-based stakeholders.

## ‘Thanks is enough’ for suppliers of goods and services

When school staff receive an offer from current or prospective suppliers of goods or services, the standard and desirable response is to politely decline, and say ‘Thanks is Enough’.

This simple gesture shows that staff members understand the importance of ensuring impartiality in the school’s decision-making.

While gift, benefit and hospitality offers, such as hampers, football tickets or invitations to corporate functions from suppliers, may be gestures of goodwill, they may be perceived to give businesses and suppliers a commercial edge in the future.

Accepting such offers can give rise to a conflict of interest; lead to the perception of bias among colleagues and communities; and call a staff member’s objectivity and integrity into doubt.

This also applies to instances such as door prizes and raffle prizes where a conflict of interest may arise.

## Sponsorships and donations

Schools regularly enter into sponsorship and donation arrangements. These arrangements do not constitute gift, benefit or hospitality offers as defined in the Policy, and are managed through different policies and guidelines. Your school principal will be aware of these policies and guidelines.

When assessing sponsorship proposals, principals consider whether the products and objectives of a potential sponsor are consistent with school and Department policies, values and objectives.

They should also consider whether the sponsorship, or aspects of a sponsorship proposal, will provide an advantage to that sponsor over any competitors. Principals may wish to consult the broader school community for its views. Staff members with familial or commercial connections to a potential sponsor have to declare their conflict of interest.

Promotional material for school functions, such as fetes, must contain a statement that the school and the Department do not endorse any of the products and services offered by sponsors. The school should also make clear to sponsors that sponsorship of a particular event does not guarantee future sponsorship or business from the school.

## published information

Consolidated and de-identified information about school-based offers received is published annually on the Department’s website.

More information about the Department’s Policy is available online at: [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/gifts.aspx).